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THE BOOK REPORT PANEL: A PROJECT IN MULTILEVEL COMMUNICATION

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by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND THE PROCEDURE

I. INTRODUCTION

Many experts have suggested that the communication skills may be taught effectively through the use of literature. However, in his study on the readability of secondary school textbooks, Aukerman stated:

> At least 3,000,000 young people in grades 7-12 in America today are being given American literature, English literature, and world literature text books that they cannot read![1]

It would seem to follow that if these students cannot read the text books, the effective exercise of those basic skills which the study of literature is said to promote would be seriously impaired and the value to them of the literature course made negligible. Other studies indicate that current literature programs in many schools not only cause "depreciated feelings of self-inadequacy and general discouragement"[2] of the poorer students but also fail to challenge the brighter students, or to be meaningful to those

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[1]Robert Aukerman, "Readability of Secondary School Literature Text Books," English Journal, LIV (September, 1965), 533.

[2]Robert S. Graham, "The English Teacher: A Major Cause of Dropouts," English Journal, LIV (October, 1965), 629-632.

students who do not belong to the "middle class."[1]

It was, however, not the purpose of this study to attempt to fix blame nor to advocate the complete abolition of the literature text book but to explore one method, the book report panel, by which communication skills might be maintained and developed through use of multilevel materials and grouping techniques.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It was the problem of this study to define and to evaluate the book report panel as a method of helping to develop student communication skills: listening, reading, writing, and speaking; and of aiding the student to gain a better understanding of the ways in which human beings act, think, and feel.

III. NEED FOR THE STUDY

The writer felt that some method of supplementing the traditional anthology-centered literature program was necessary because of the readability problem of the anthologies as cited by Aukerman[2] and because of obvious weaknesses in the format of the traditional program.

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Aukerman, op. cit., 533.

Weaknesses are apparent in the anthology-centered program in the following areas:

1. Selections in the anthology often are excerpts or abridgements which fail to present the student with an opportunity to experience the literary value of the material;
2. Since the class is composed of students with various reading abilities, it is evident that no single reading selection could be both comprehensible and yet challenging to all students;
3. Neither students nor teachers are given much choice in the selection of material;
4. Anthology selections are often chosen for middle-class consumption and fail to interest the non-middle-class student;
5. Anthologies, which follow a traditional practice of selecting material that is offensive to no group, often fail to present selections which deal with pertinent problems in our society.
6. Since plays and novels taught in common take considerable class time, the student usually has an opportunity to read only one teacher-directed novel and/or one teacher-directed play during the school year; and
7. Novels, other than the novel read in common, are

often assigned with little direction, and as a result the student's reading of them is often superficial.

In addition, most authorities agree that the tired old book report method, which is often used as a method of expanding the anthology-centered program, is sadly in need of revision. Rozsnafszky stated:

> Book reports in one form or another will always be with us. Students enjoy and profit from reading novels and writing about what they read. But the conventional book report is often plodding and mechanical, requiring only superficial thinking.[1]

She stated further: "The typical student strings a series of sentences together all vaguely related to, say Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice, without showing or proving anything."[2] To which the writer might add, "without experiencing or understanding anything."

IV. DEFINITION OF TERMS

For purposes of this study the term multilevel is applied both to communication and to material. Multilevel communication implies that reading, writing, speaking, and listening are done on various levels of understanding,

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[1]Jane Rozsnafszky, "Teaching Unity in Composition: Another Approach to the Book Report," English Journal, LV (February, 1966), 1075.

[2]Ibid.

interpretation, and evaluation.

Multilevel material is that material or those resources that are so arranged that the students of various abilities can readily find and use the material most suitable to them individually. This is material that is compatible with their reading ability and with their emotional and psychological maturity level.

The following definition of grouping and by extension grouping techniques comes from the Dictionary of Education:

> The act or procedure of dividing the pupils of a class into two or more groups on the basis of interest or ability for purpose of adapting instruction.[1]

Various techniques would of necessity be involved to achieve this end. They might include teacher evaluation, tests such as the Iowa Test of Educational Development and the Iowa Silent Reading Test as well as pupil interest in a particular subject area. In this study, grouping will refer to that within a given class or section. The basis of the grouping would be left to the discretion of the instructor.

V. PROCEDURES

The following procedures were employed in the preparation of this study:

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[1]Carter V. Good, Ed., Dictionary of Education (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1959), p. 256.

1. Selected literature in the following areas was reviewed: (1) the use of literature as a means of teaching communication, (2) approaches to the teaching of literature, (3) the problem of selection of literature, (4) various devices used for student reporting of what is read, and (5) the use of group techniques in the study of literature;
2. The value of the book report panel was discussed and illustrated as a means of enabling the student (1) to become aware of the need for communication and for developing skill in all aspects of it; (2) to become aware of the wide degree of variation in purpose possible in communication; (3) to recognize the specific values inherent in all facets of the communication complex; and (4) to recognize individual responsibility in the intra-group communication process;
3. The potential value of the book report panel as a means of helping the student develop listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills was discussed;
4. A sample book report panel unit designed for a tenth grade English class was constructed as a resource unit for development of skills in multilevel communication;

5. A list of thirty volumes whose level of difficulty, subject content, and literary value lent themselves to use as subjects of high school book report panels was made.
6. Recommendations for the construction and for the use of the book report panel were presented.

CHAPTER II

THE REVIEW OF LITERATURE

It is the purpose of this chapter to review selected literature concerning the objectives, problems and practices in teaching communication skills through the use of literature.

I. THE USE OF LITERATURE AS A MEANS OF TEACHING COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Many experts have suggested that communication skills may be taught effectively through the use of literature. It has been found that literature can give the student "experience"--something to think, speak and write about. In the process of this "experience" all communication skills become involved.

Carlsen stated:

> Many teachers saw that one could not practice writing without writing about something, that one could not practice speaking without speaking about something. They saw also that when a student was filled with a subject, when he had something of importance to say and was in a situation where he wanted to say it, the expression itself improved enormously. Similarly, these teachers saw that there was something to be done with literature other than the mere memorization of facts about the author's life and the ins and outs of the sequence of the story. They saw that a piece of literature gave students a vision of how life was lived in another period or another culture, that it gave

them insight into the ways people think, and why they react as they do in certain kinds of situations.[1]

Smith also believed that literature has much to offer to the development of communication skills:

> Literature will be taught for what it communicates to boys and girls--ideas, experiences, moods, a sense of values. . . here [in the study of literature] mastery of the processes of reading is all-important. The pupil must have at his command a variety of ways to attack new words, power to follow a line of reasoning, skill in pursuing clues to the plot or to the delineation of character. The student must be able to visualize the scene as the author depicts it in words, to yield to the emotional connotation of language, and to ferret out symbolic and figurative meanings. At the same time he must be able to examine ideas critically and to develop standards of evaluation for further reading.[2]

Friedrich contended that it is only through the study of literature that one may attain a maturity of style in composition. He stated:

> One must consider in this connection that literature--ignoring for the moment its humanizing functions--operates almost entirely through language written and read, spoken and listened to. The more thoroughly one reads, the more one becomes aware of varieties of statements and their uses.[3]

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[1]G. Robert Carlsen, "How Can the Language Arts Promote International Understanding?" [in] M. Jerry Weiss, Ed., An English Teacher's Reader (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1962), pp. 419-420.

[2]Dora V. Smith, "Re-establishing Guidelines for the English Curriculum," English Journal, XLVII (September, 1958), 319.

[3]Gerhard Friedrich, "The English Teacher and the Process of Communication," English Journal, IV (January, 1966), 19.

O'Malley commented on this interrelation of literature and composition as follows:

> We must understand literature and writing together because they are two sides of the same coin: communication. Whether the page be printed or hand-scrawled, it is experience concentrated into words, just as a cup of coffee is concentrated into instant powder. Writing is the magic operation which packs it in; reading is the magic operation which draws it out.[1]

Although most teachers are aware of the two-sided nature of communication, O'Malley suggested that they often fail to give concrete implementation to the theoretical aim of the reading-writing course. He defined this aim as follows:

> . . . to produce a human being who is sensitive to and perceptive of human experience and human ideas, aware of the importance of order, conscious that interest and clarity are the keys to the craftsmanship of communication, and that communication is fundamental to human life.[2]

O'Malley stressed the inductive approach in writing. He felt that the student could look to literature for style and inspiration but should look within himself for experiences to write about. O'Malley felt his suggestion might be "charged with subordinating literature to writing or emphasizing technique over ideas," but he countered:

> What is literature if not writing? . . . It is technique, craftsmanship, use of the means of concentrating

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[1]William J. O'Malley, "Literary Craftsmanship: The Integration of Literature and Composition," English Journal, LII (April, 1963), 247.

[2]Ibid., p. 248.

> ideas into words, style--call it what you will--which makes literature a great communication of experience.[1]

Although Irmscher would agree with O'Malley that students "must have something to say before they can write," he found cause for concern in the "utilitarian concept of language which subordinates literature." He felt that many people have come to think of words as tools which if used in an "unconfused way" fulfill their function. "As a result, much prose has the merit of clarity but little else."[2] He further suggested that the rapidly changing language and standards of usage "should make one concerned about the possibilities of a return to anarchy and barbarism in our language."[3] Irmscher felt that the study of literature is necessary to correct these possibilities. Unlike O'Malley, he did not favor a writing program emphasizing the students' personal experiences.

Referring to the present emphasis of the Commission on English and the National Council of Teachers of English on literature-oriented writing, he stated:

> Literature demands responses, both intellectual and emotional--responses that students can learn to write about perceptively. Perhaps there is no better way to give substance to student thinking and writing, particularly when we constantly exhaust their storehouse of limited experiences and annually encourage

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[1] Ibid.

[2] William F. Irmscher, "An Apology for Literature," English Journal, III (April, 1963), 252.

[3] Ibid., p. 254.

another rehearsal of the story of their lives.[1]

He contended that improvement of the literature curriculum would "mean longer views of shorter passages, more knowledge, more study and more preparation, more retraining of English teachers."[2]

Squire suggested that the problem in many literature programs exists as a result of confusion in objectives. Teachers "tend, too often, to see lessons in literature as ends in themselves, rather than as means by which we can fire students to read widely and well."[3]

Fletcher urged teachers to seek new and stimulating topics which would relate the world of the student with the world of literature in a fresh and meaningful way:

> We dole out the same topics for themes and expect the same responses. It is no wonder that the quality of a student's thought in writing wanes as he waxes in proficiency in the rarefied IBM, Don't-ever-use "enthuse" approach of the college boards.[4]

Collignon,[5] and Klein,[6] as well as many others,

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[1] Ibid., p. 255.

[2] Ibid., p. 256.

[3] James R. Squire, "National Study of High School English Programs: A School for all Seasons," English Journal, LV (March, 1966), 288.

[4] Paul Fletcher, "What Doesn't Happen in Writing--and Why it Doesn't," English Journal, LIII (January, 1964), 27.

[5] Joseph P. Collignon, "Teaching Them to Write," Clearing House, XXXVII (November, 1962), 143.

[6] Anna Lou Klein, "Expository Writing for Amateurs," English Journal, LIII (January, 1964), 21.

agreed that writing improved when, in addition to reading for content, pupils studied literature for style and as a model for writing. They found that ideas from or reactions to great literature could provide interesting theme topics.

Most of the authors surveyed, however, agreed that along with the writing connected with the study of literature a certain amount of composition about personal experiences and observation is important. McNerney agreed with O'Malley that such practical types of composition as letter-writing and clear and accurate reporting are not to be neglected.[1] The National Council of Teachers of English, although favoring writing based on literature, cautioned:

> Intellectual generalization alone is not enough. The social, emotional, and intellectual situation in which a language skill is developed should be as identical as possible with the situations in which it is to be used in life outside the school.[2]

II. VARIOUS APPROACHES TO THE TEACHING OF LITERATURE

The 1965 Report of the Commission on English made the following comment on the three most familiar approaches to the teaching of literature:

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[1]Chester T. McNerney, The Curriculum (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1953), p. 2.

[2]National Council of Teachers of English, The English Arts in the Secondary School (New York: Appleton-Century-Crafts, Inc., 1956), p. 52.

> The usual ways of setting up a course in literature are by chronological-historical survey; by themes; and by literary types. Each has advantages; none is free from pitfalls; and all will work in the hands of skillful teachers in a responsibly staffed English department.[1]

Many writers, however, have expressed definite opinions about the desirability of the various approaches. Henry, for example, criticized the typical survey literature course, which he considered "a way of pressing through some huge sweep of material in an additive way." He condemned "senseless" attempts to cover our literary heritage as "misspent energy which could be better spent teaching composition." He felt that this type of teaching (the survey approach) is not consistent with modern research which has stressed the importance of process and structure in concept development, which he felt should guide the English teacher in planning his curriculum. He defined the process of concept development as follows:

1. A concept is best developed by exploration and discovery rather than step-by-step direction and guidance to a sure end.
2. A concept is best developed as it serves to harmonize more and more cases. A concept is not the storing up of many cases.
3. A concept is best understood when it is sought within, or a place is discovered for it in, a pattern or structure.[2]

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[1] Freedom and Discipline in English, Report of the Commission on English (New York: College Entrance Examination Boards, 1965), p. 51.

[2] George H. Henry, "The Idea of Coverage in the Teaching of Literature," English Journal, LIV (September, 1965), 475-482.

Granata agreed with Henry on the advisability of reading individual works in depth rather than attempting coverage of literary periods. In her article she defended Great Expectations as a novel which would give the students the opportunity to explore concepts:

> Its social and historical significance helps the student to see his place in time and his own society and of a part of his heritage. The conditions and classes of people, their occupation, pleasures, the City, Newgate, the prisoners and servants--all provide the student with a feeling for the past conditions of man and for his relation to his present.[1]

Hunt further advised:

> Postpone literary history if you can. High school students haven't read enough literature to need to fit thousands of pieces into an orderly chronological pattern. First hand generalizations are a fraud. Let him read one novel of the period or maybe two or three, or more if he insists; but let him read it hard.[2]

Friedrich, too, stressed "hard" reading of novels, or as he called it, "the creative reading of novels." He stated:

> I am concerned with every aspect of wording, from the accurate rendition of detail to purposeful order. In this comprehensive sense the compositional choices great authors have made are eminently relevant to the communicative tasks confronting the student and the citizen, and the disciplines of precise reading and precise writing can and should reinforce each other.[3]

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[1]May Granata, "Pip's Great Expectations and Ours," English Journal, LIV (September, 1965), 525.

[2]Kellogg W. Hunt, "Getting Into the Novel," English Journal, L (December, 1961), 601.

[3]Friedrich, op. cit., p. 20.

Although the bulk of current articles seem to stress the reading of several pieces of literature in depth rather than surveying literature, several writers advised caution in discarding the old too rapidly. In Wonnberger's reply to 1960 Report of the Commission of English of the College Entrance Examination Board, he stated:

> Does one dare here to make a plea for a return to stress on literary history and biography? There were abuses, we know, in the old survey courses, especially from teachers with no personal taste in or experience with literature, and too much willingness to escape into a jungle of facts and dates. But is there no virtue at all in trying to teach American and English literature in some kind of sequence, with perhaps strong emphasis on a few works, but with frequent side glances at all riches beyond and at the Zeit Geist of Age after Age? For many students, even those going on to good colleges, literature in secondary school may be the last serious brush with belles lettres, and if we do not give some notion of our literary heritage here, when do they get it?[1]

Although this question remains unanswered, the Report of the Commission of English suggested that the advantages of the thematic arrangement of the curriculum often outweigh the advantages of "the more arbitrary chronological survey."

> It [the thematic approach] demands deeper insight and more imaginative selection of material. It appeals to the student who is concerned with ideas, and it confronts him with perennial questions and problems, allowing him to see how writers of different areas have dealt with them.[2]

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[1] Carl G. Wonnberger, "A Report on a Report; Preparation in English For College-Bound Students," English Journal, L (May, 1961), 321.

[2] Freedom and Discipline in English, op. cit., p. 52.

The Board of Education of the City of New York also recommended the thematic approach in teaching literature in the following endorsement:

> The organization of literature around broad themes facilitates the integration of literature with all other aspects of the language arts program and with other areas in the curriculum; it permits adaptation of the literature program within the same theme center, to individuals and classes of widely differing abilities and tastes; it establishes a meaningful relationship between the intensive study of literature in class and extensive outside reading by individuals; above all, it stresses the human values of literature for its meaning in the lives of the students.[1]

Noble indicated an increasing need to incorporate into the reading program more world and contemporary literature, since "the high school student should be better prepared to live in a world of change and in close communication with people of all nations."[2] He agreed with Carlsen, who stressed the responsibility of the English teacher in creating a program which would serve the needs of international understanding. Carlsen stated:

> The feeling of many educators has been that the most successful pattern of organization would be one by themes in which a single theme would show the basic universality of man in dealing with similar problems in similar ways the world over. . . . As the student

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[1]Board of Education of the City of New York, "Reading and Literature," An English Teacher's Reader, op. cit., p. 407.

[2]Nolan L. Noble, "English Teachers Recommend," California Education, I (February, 1964), 9.

> moved from selection to selection, he would gain an awareness of the persistence of basic problems, the persistence of similar kinds of emotions of men in meeting this aspect of their lives.[1]

Although many writers were enthusiastic in their endorsement of this approach to teaching literature, they recognized certain problems inherent in it. It demands much of the classroom teacher since there has been little published in the form of a text book which brings together material from such a point of view. Teachers must also guard against establishing "far-fetched and artificial relationships to force a book into a theme, narrowing the scope of literary experience to the didactic or over-emphasizing the guidance or social studies aspect of literature."[2]

A third approach involves the consideration of literature through literary types or genres. The advantage of this method is "that it forces the student to look upon literature as literature, not as an adjunct to philosophy, psychology, or social studies."[3]

The hazard in this approach is the tendency toward "juiceless formalism and an excessive preoccupation with terminology and analysis."[4]

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[1] Carlsen, op. cit., p. 421.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Freedom and Discipline in English, p. 53.

[4] Ibid.

These three methods of organizing the course in literature do not exclude one another. "Wise teachers may well rely on no single one of these methods, seeking instead some combination that capitalizes on the advantages of each and minimizes the dangers."[1] Cottrell and Josephs, for instance, suggested organizing the literature for each year around a central theme, such as "Aspects of Love" or "American Puritan Attitude," as one possible device for including numerous works varying in cultural origin, literary type and level of difficulty.[2]

Most writers were reluctant to state a definite amount of time which they felt should be spent in the teaching of literature. In most integrated programs, it would be difficult to distinguish just what would constitute these separate aspects. The National Council of Teachers of English asserted that the amount of time given to reading and literature should depend mainly on the ability of the individuals in the class to comprehend and appreciate the books they read.[3]

The National Study of High School English indicated

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Beekman W. Cottrell and Lois S. Josephs, "A Genuine Accumulation," English Journal, LIV (February, 1965), 91.

[3] National Council of Teachers of English, The English Language, p. 194.

that in the 168 schools studied, considerable time was being spent in the teaching of literature. The study revealed the following divisions of time spent teaching various aspects of English in the secondary schools: literature, 52.2%; language, 13.5%; composition, 15.7%; speech, 4.9%; and reading, 4.5%. Noting the emphasis placed on literature, Squire stated:

> I, for one, am willing to suggest that the overwhelming emphasis on literature may be exactly what we need, provided the moments are of sufficient intensity and depth. Our literature programs tend to place far too little attention on the close reading of literary texts, far too much on the superficial coverage and talking about texts.[1]

Applebee indicated that many resourceful English departments have painlessly extended their literature curriculum by working closely with their school libraries to make available a wide choice of reading to their students, "on the premise that students want to read and that reading begets more reading." Many of these schools have established classroom book collections and paperback bookstores that promote the owning of books.[2]

Squire and Applebee reported that the National Study of High School English Programs revealed some encouraging

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[1]Squire, op. cit., p. 282.

[2]Roger K. Applebee, "National Study of High School English Programs: A Record of English Teaching Today," English Journal, LV (March, 1966), 279-281.

developments in the teaching of English. On the basis of the survey, Squire recommended

> . . . more carefully planned attention to teaching the methods and approaches to close reading of individual texts, far less coverage of history, works, authors; far more guided individual reading programs built upon the intelligent use of classroom book collections. Indeed, our recommendation is that we strive for 500 appropriate titles for student reading in every classroom--a standard which our observation suggests may well lead to an average expectation that young people will read 20 or 25 books a semester rather than the usual paltry four or five. Our experience suggests such an approach will lead to greater library use. And we would also provide much school classroom time for reading--at least one hour, if not two, each week--time when the teacher works with the individual and with groups.[1]

III. SELECTION OF LITERATURE

With the modern emphasis on reading more "whole" pieces of literature in depth, the problem of the selection of literature becomes increasingly complex. Carlsen, in Assumptions IX through XVII of those listed in his article, "Conflicting Assumptions in the Teaching of English," presented what he felt were the traditional and modern positions on the selection of literature:

Traditional	Modern
Assumption IX	
That there is a clearly defined line between great literature with a capital L and other kinds of writing.	That there is a continuum between the poorest and best in literature.

[1]Squire, op. cit., p. 290.

Traditional	Modern
Assumption X	
That schools should expose children only to the best in literature so that they will come to prize it.	That in order to develop their taste in literature, children must be given freedom of selection, even though this means they may choose trash at certain stages of development.
Assumption XI	
That children will never find and read the great monuments of literature unless the school teaches these great works.	That if the schools develop an interest in reading, even though it is through using second rate materials, that interest will later lead the reader to many of the great works when he has the ability and the maturity to read them.
Assumption XII	
That the mature reader reads literature of only one kind--the best.	That the mature reader reads and enjoys literature of varying worth.
Assumption XIII	
That literary appreciation can be developed in a child, even though he actively dislikes the selection that the teacher is teaching.	That learning to appreciate literature depends upon the child's liking for the selection he is reading.
Assumption XIV	
That there are deferred values in the reading of literature. Even though the child gets little out of the experience at the moment, he will remember the selection and be able to appreciate it in the future.	That literature must always have a direct impact on a reader here and now if it is to be a meaningful experience for him, now or in the future.

Traditional	Modern
Assumption XV	
That aesthetic values in a piece of literature are to be found by studying such things as rhythmic patterns, the precision of structure, word picture, and the like.	That aesthetic values exist in terms of the significance of the synthesis of experience that a piece of literature evokes in the reader.
Assumption XVI	
That the individual develops an appreciation of literature through a formalized knowledge of the rules, conventions, and techniques that authors employ.	That the individual develops an appreciation of literature out of wide reading and discussion of the human understandings and insights developed through a work of art.
Assumption XVII	
That there are great works of literature that should be read by all educated people in a culture.	That there are experiences that people should have through literature, but the different works of literature will give those experiences to different readers.[1]

Carlsen's article prompted response from both traditionalists and modernists as well as those who felt there was a middle ground.

Brown, in defending that middle ground, submitted assumptions which she felt proved "that the middle ground offers clear-cut values worthy of an English teacher's

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[1]G. Robert Carlsen, "Conflicting Assumptions in the Teaching of English," English Journal, XLIX (September, 1960), 377-386.

consideration." Assumptions VI, VII, and VIII dealt with the selection of literature:

Assumption VI

That there is a continuum between the poorest and best in literature, but that proficiency at the lower level does not assure a progression toward greatest understanding and appreciation at a higher level.

Assumption VII

That the best possible way for a student to become familiar with the large body of great writing is to expose him to it, in small portions if necessary, at an early age.

Assumption VIII

That while aesthetic values exist only in terms of "the significance of the synthesis of experience that a piece of literature evokes in the reader," he may often experience these values more fully after he understands the form used by the writer.[1]

Brown further stated:

A program of English based on the above assumptions would go far in dissolving the conflict between "teaching language as a skill" or "teaching the language arts as art." The emphasis would be properly placed on teaching the student to be creative in writing and reading, speaking and listening, by training him to use effectively the skills inherent in the language arts.[2]

The question of whether the student should read Hot Rod or Hamlet, or which student should read which, or when and if each student should read which become the

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[1] Marice C. Brown, "Re-examination of the Middle Ground," English Journal, L (March, 1961), 191.

[2] Ibid., p. 192.

practical considerations of these assumptions.

Eno and Smith felt that the student's own reading interest should be considered in the selection of books to be studied. In their study, 510 students in grades seven through twelve were asked, "If you could have an author write a story-to-order for you, what would you have in it?"

The percentage of students requesting a type of story revealed the following popularity ratings:

Junior high boys:		Junior high girls:	
Mystery	16%	Romance	65%
Sports	15%	Mystery	20%
Science fiction	15%	Career	11%
Adventure	15%	Comedy	11%
Animal stories	10%		
Senior high boys		**Senior high girls:**	
Adventure	46%	Romance	66%
Mystery	25%	Career	36%
Sea stories	25%	Mystery	32%
Comedy	24%	Adventure	30%
Historical	23%	Comedy	28%
Science fiction	21%		

> Thirteen types of stories were suggested by their responses, but so many students desired combinations that there was a total of 836 requests. (These multiple requests explain why percentage totals of students given above are above 100).[1]

Appleby and Conner also felt it is necessary for the teacher to be aware of individual reading preference. In their report on the individualized reading program, developed at the University of Iowa High School, they stated

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[1]Isabel Eno and Mary L. Smith, "What Do They Really Want to Read?" English Journal, L (May, 1961), 343.

that students were asked what they had been reading. From this preference a reading profile was developed for each student. Next the teachers "developed a list of suggested titles for each student by pursuing his reading profile sheet, determining his area of interest and the type of book he is curious about."[1] They found such sources as the following helpful in developing lists: Books for You (National Council of Teachers of English, 1964), Patterns in Reading (Jean Carolyn Roos, American Library Association, 1961), Good Reading (The Committee on College Reading) and Reading Ladders for Human Relations (American Council on Education, 1963).

Appleby and Conner concluded:

> By guiding the student throughout the semester, we encouraged him to deepen, then widen his reading interest, noting the direction and growth of his reading maturity.[2]

Graham agreed that it is unrealistic to expect students of differing abilities to read a common literature. He felt that the emphasis on the college-bound has resulted in the "drop-out" of many students of limited ability. On the basis of evidence "found wherever effective teaching takes place," Graham presented the following assumptions:

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[1]Bruce C. Appleby and John W. Conner, "Well, What Did You Think of It?" English Journal, LIV (October, 1965), 606-612.

[2]Ibid., p. 612.

> (1) The atmosphere and attitude facing the non-college bound student in most schools should and can be adjusted to become a positive rather than a negative force, and (2) curriculum change is an immediate need and can be accomplished effectively so that every student finds a measure of success and reason for being in school.[1]

Since the English teacher, according to Graham's findings, is a major cause of school drop-outs, he (the teacher) must acknowledge his responsibilities in providing an opportunity for the non-college-bound by instituting curriculum changes which will more adequately meet their needs. "Reading lists need to be overhauled, and close reading and discussion experiences related to the student's non-college bound world need to be encouraged."[2]

Granite suggested another consideration in book selection. The "lower-class" students, "many of them born with strong intellectual potentials, but impeded by economic, social or racial obstacles from fully developing their potentials, are often poorly motivated to read novels designed for middle class consumption." By selecting novels with "social orientation," such as Great Expectations, Sister Carrie or A Chance to Belong, students were able to relate their experiences with the experiences of the characters of

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[1]Robert J. Graham, "The English Teacher: A Major Cause of Drop-outs," English Journal, LIV (October, 1965), 629-630.

[2]Ibid., p. 612.

the novel. Granite stated:

> Their appreciation of literature as insight into human experience had deepened. Their ability to communicate their conceptions of the basic needs of men had been strengthened.[1]

Hipple contended that literature with a social message--particularly concerning the problems of the Negro--must be included in the literature programs for the white student as well as for the Negro student if today's English teacher wishes to fulfill his social responsibility to tomorrow's leaders. He suggested the following books which he felt would be helpful in breaking down the feeling of prejudice in our students: To Kill a Mockingbird, Cry, the Beloved Country, Native Son, Strange Fruit, Go Tell it on the Mountain, Too Late the Phalarope, Intruder in the Dust, A Raisin in the Sun, Black Like Me, and Black Boy.[2]

Miles presented a plea for more consideration of the needs of today's average student "who is currently being pushed through a watered-down college prep course," which Miles characterized as "generally ineffective, unsystematic and dull."[3] He made the following suggestions which he

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[1]Harvey R. Granite, "Good Books For 'Lower Class Students'," English Journal, LIV (October, 1965), 585-591.

[2]Ted Hipple, "Through Literature to Freedom," English Journal, LV (February, 1966), 172.

[3]Robert Miles, "Literature for the Average Student," English Journal, LV (February, 1966), 172.

felt could improve the curriculum:

> The literature for the average students should be intelligible, enjoyable and significant for them. Second, the literature should be arranged in some pattern; preferably it should be organized around themes or human problems which are recurrent in literature and relevant to the student's concerns. . . . By looking more closely and honestly at the ordinary student and at the functions of literature, we must devise a new curriculum that will bring the two more happily together.[1]

While it is important to be conscious of these individual needs, the Report of the Commission on English reminded teachers of English:

> In the high school years, the aim should be not to find the students' level so much as to raise it, and such books [junior books, literature of adolescence] rarely elevate. For college-bound students, particularly, no such concessions as they imply are justified. Maturity of thought, vocabulary, syntax, and construction is the criterion of excellence in literature, and that criterion must not be abandoned for apparent expediency. The competent teacher can bridge the distances between good books and the immaturity of his students; that is, in fact, his primary duty as a teacher of literature.[2]

Dunning took exception to the Commission's criticism of junior books. He stated:

> I claim a primary duty of teachers of literature is engaging students in the reading of books--any books at all, in many cases. For the out-of-class reading program, especially, junior books are indispensable. Yes, they meet the "needs and interests" of adolescents. They lure the non-reader and keep the indifferent reader reading. Wise teachers help students

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Freedom and Discipline, p. 49.

> become dissatisfied with low quality junior books; good teachers press students from interest-meeting thin books to interest-extending books of some merit. . . . The Commission implies that junior books are uniformly shoddy, contemptible and useless. This assessment of junior books is neither fair nor accurate.[1]

Hartung disagreed with many authors who emphasized that the selection of literature should be geared strictly to the individual's ability, interest or social needs. He questioned the use of "new" books, which have not had time to be assessed for their cultural importance. He contended that a strong subject-centered curriculum would do much "toward remedying the diffusion and fragmentation that now characterizes American culture."

He presented the following guiding principles:

> The core of the English program should be the special subject material of English--the English language and the best works of literature in English suitable for high school reading. Suitability should be determined by intrinsic value, by cultural importance, by standard social values, and by full capacity of normal high school students.
>
> The program should be cumulative. It should begin with basic materials that contribute to an understanding of later works, and it should build toward a mature appreciation of the best literature. . . . It should be not only responsive to contemporary interests but guided by tested values. It should be flexible to meet the demands of diverse educational circumstances, but it should also provide a core of common experience and subject matter.[2]

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[1]Stephen A. Dunning, "Junior Book Roundup," English Journal, LV (January, 1966), 101.

[2]Charles V. Hartung, "The High School Program in English: A Critique," Educational Forum, XXVI (March, 1962), 297-299.

Hartung found little excuse for substituting such books as Swiftwater and Goodbye, My Lady for novels of "tested value" such as Silas Marner and The Tale of Two Cities.[1]

Tovatt, however, expressed concern about the many teachers who "seem to have a notion that literature was established in the curriculum by some act akin to a decree and as such is above viewing with any idea of change" even though these same teachers have many students incapable of reading the material. He reminded the teacher who insists upon teaching "the classics" to be aware of the circumstances which brought them into the curriculum:

> Literature first made its entrance into the secondary school after the intensive study of English grammar began to replace that of Greek and Latin, and only then was it included because each candidate for college entrance was required to write an essay on a specific literary selection. Each year the college-entrance boards released a list of books on which the essay topics were to be set, and the concept of 'required reading lists,' and eventually of 'the Classics,' was born.[2]

Tovatt felt that teachers must have firm convictions to guide their selection of literature, rather than conflicting and transitory views, if they are to maintain any semblance of equilibrium for themselves and their students.

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[1] Ibid., p. 299.

[2] Anthony Tovatt, "Two Basic Convictions About Teaching Literature," English Journal, XLIX (November, 1960), 530.

He presented two basic convictions which he felt could act as a guide to the selection of literature:

> First, the person who accepts the responsibility for teaching literature must have the conviction that an existing literature program is not inviolate and that with the teacher rests the final responsibility for making choices that are governed by his best assessment of what a particular class needs.
>
> The second basic conviction about teaching literature, which it seems to me necessary for the teacher to hold, is that literature must always be meaningful for the student in the present if it is to be meaningful for him in the future.[1]

IV. SPECIAL PROBLEMS IN THE USE OF THE NOVEL

The novel, as Masback aptly pointed out, "because of its complexity and length, presents a difficult instructional problem to the teacher who feels that his students should be encouraged and taught to read both widely and deeply."

> The teacher who chooses one novel, assigns it to the class, and then proceeds by one method or another, to "teach" that novel thoroughly, sacrifices, in effect, breadth for depth; the teacher who uses one variation or another of the familiar book report approach, on the other hand, often seems to sacrifice quality for quantity.[2]

Proponents of the "common reading" of one novel in class are faced with the problem of selection of that novel

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[1] Ibid., p. 534.

[2] Frederick J. Masback, "An Approach to the Novel in High School English," English Journal, L (April, 1961), 278.

or novels. Not only are they faced with the philosophical aspects of selection but also with the problem of the actual selection of particular books which they feel will best accomplish their objectives in a class of students who have different abilities, interests and backgrounds. Those who wish to allow the students to choose novels for themselves to be read outside class are faced with the problem of determining the value of these individual novels for particular students. Masback stated:

> If they [teachers] make no effort to control the outside readings, they are often disturbed by the poor quality of the novels which many of their students choose; if they control the choice they usually discover that there has been very little carry-over of reading skills to other novels.[1]

Although Hunt suggested that a survey among former high school students might reveal, as did a college survey, that the "most hated novels were those which had been required to be read," the advantages of a required common reading program are numerous. To reap these advantages, Hunt suggested that

> when you choose a novel you choose it for the students, not for someone else; that students talk about the novel with each other, not read it in isolation; that you read all the criticisms you can find before you teach any novel, help them see for themselves.[2]

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[1] Ibid., p. 279.

[2] Kellogg W. Hunt, "Getting Into a Novel," English Journal, L (December, 1961), 606.

Granata suggested that Great Expectations could be used effectively as a novel for common reading because of its basic appeal to all students. She stated:

> This novel should be read by the whole class in common because the shared experiences and study widen the individual student's experience, enjoyment, appreciation, perception, motivation, and participation. He becomes involved not only with the literature, but with the interchange of ideas, reactions and responses.[1]

Perhaps the greatest criticism of the common reading program is that it lacks flexibility in providing for individual differences. This problem has been considered by many authors.

Hillocks suggested that the study of the novel should be divided into three areas which proceed from the least complex and abstract considerations to the most challenging consideration.

> These three areas--environment, levels of meaning, and genre--provide the basis for a curriculum which, as a concomitant of good teaching, ought to produce not merely readers who read with comprehension in the conventional sense, but readers who are able to focus a multitude of concepts from a variety of sources upon a single work--readers who take much to a work and glean more from it. Their reading will not be a linear movement from one book to another but a pyramidal synthesis of all their reading.[2]

The Committee on Intensive Reading further commented:

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[1]Granata, op. cit., p. 525.

[2]George Hillocks, Jr., Approaches to Meaning: A Basis for a Literature Curriculum." English Journal, LIII (September, 1964), 413-421.

> The intensive reading of the novel is on many levels of understanding. From an apparently simple question may develop a discussion ranging from obvious fact to profundities, the said, the unsaid; the recognition--or detection--and understanding of implication. The novel should be studied on these levels, vertically. It should also be studied horizontally.[1]

Although breaking down the presentation of the literature into various "levels of learning" and relating it to the student's world are attempts to gain flexibility, Aukerman's opening statement on the readability of Secondary School Literature Textbooks indicated that there is still much work to be done.

He pointed out that while many teachers personally select the novel which they will use for intensive reading independently, it is a more common practice for them to use the novel which is in the literature anthology. In a survey of sixty-six secondary school literature anthologies of recent copyright and currently in use in America's schools today, it was found that there were few if any that could be read at the independent level by any secondary school students in the bottom 25 per cent "inasmuch as such students are reading at fifth grade and below."[2]

He concluded:

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[1]Marion Sheridan, et al., "How Should We Teach Novels?" Essays on the Teaching of English (New York: Appleton-Century-Crafts, Inc., 1960), p. 236.

[2]Aukerman, op. cit., pp. 538-540.

> Thus it impinges upon the English departments to adopt a multitext approach and to know the independent literature reading level of each student. Homogeneous grouping according to literature reading levels should be attempted as often as possible. It is probable that "literature" anthologies designed specifically for "functional non-readers of literature" are necessary to provide exposure to the values of literature in its many forms.[1]

Alm agreed that "we do not develop literary men" by using literature that they cannot read. He contended that one of the most important responsibilities of the English teacher was to develop lifetime reading habits in his students. He listed five factors which he believed "change student's attitude toward books from wonder to jadedness." First, he found a primary difficulty is that teachers too often select the wrong book. In his research he found that Moby Dick is taught as a class reading in every grade, seven through twelve, and that "the list of classics most commonly read by entire classes today does not differ markedly from the list read most commonly in 1900."[2] He also found that many teachers were using classic comics and adaptations in teaching literary selections to their students. He stated:

> We are aiming for literary men. We want the best books that a group, or individuals within the group, or an individual with the group, can read with

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Richard Alm, "Goose Flesh and Glimpses of Glory," English Journal, LII (April, 1963), 262.

> pleasure and profit. Literary excellence is one criterion; the capabilities of a class are another, a too-often neglected criterion.[1]

A second factor in the "jading process" is to expect too much from the student; a third factor is to expect the book to be the same things to all readers. Alm stated:

> Each person takes to a reading situation his intellect, the accumulation of his experience, his emotions, his biases, his dreams and all these determine what--the extent and depth--he will understand and interpret; and yet, most teachers ignore this basic fact about reading by regimenting instruction.[2]

Alm also found that teachers often get in the way of the book by teaching "as if what the writer has to say must be strained through our consciousness"[3] and that the teacher seems to view certain topics, such as the author's life or the milieu in which he wrote, as being as important as or possibly more important than the literary work.

In suggesting steps for improvement, Alm pointed out that English teachers, as taxpayers, should become more vocal in their own communities in the demand for more and better books. Secondly, he felt that English teachers must know books:

> (1) Those that encompass our literary heritage; (2) those outstanding from the contemporary world of letters,

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid., pp. 263-264.

[3] Ibid., p. 264.

> books written (3) the books our students are reading, because these books may not fall in either (1) or (2).[1]

Thirdly, Alm suggested that the English teacher must know the adolescent, whom he described as a "hard-headed materialist, well aware of the world in which he lives."[2] He agreed with Burton, who stated that literature for such a reader "must be strong beer, not pink lemonade."[3] Providing books, knowing books, understanding adolescents are obvious necessities; however, Alm stated, "our greatest task, and the most difficult, is to help our students to become involved with the literature they read."[4]

Petitt, in defending the place of the well-written junior novel, also felt it is important to know the adolescent and his world. She stated:

> Adolescents are always testing themselves to find what one of my students called the 'real truth' once about themselves. These well-written novels for adolescents interpret the results of the testing as a stage in process, not as a product, an answer. These books are important because they <u>are</u> well-written, and they are well-written because their authors sensed and wished to show the importance of this crucial time of self-definition.[5]

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[1] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 265.

[2] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 266.

[3] Dwight Burton, "Trailing Clouds of Boredom Do They Come," <u>English Journal</u>, LI (April, 1962), 262.

[4] Alm, <u>op. cit</u>., p. 267.

[5] Dorothy Petitt, "A Search for Self-Definition: The Picture of Life in the Novel for the Adolescent," <u>English Journal</u>, XLIX (December, 1960), 616-626.

Although these books are not "great literature," Petitt felt that they "probe deep enough to prepare young readers for appreciating the technique of a more complex work of the creative imagination." To determine the "best written" books for adolescents, Petitt chose eighteen of the outstanding critics of books for adolescents and asked them to rank books which they felt were well written.[1] Johnny Tremain, The Yearling, Seventeenth Summer, My Friend Flicka and Goodbye, My Lady were the top choices.

Although the number of teacher-chosen novels varies, nearly all literature programs have extensive reading which gives the students some latitude in selection. This presents the teacher with the problem of teaching the students to differentiate between worthwhile fiction and "trash."

Aldrich warned that simple evaluations, telling students that their selections must be good, realistic, and concerned with social problems, will elicit such responses as Dr. No ("It's better than the books on the list"), Gidget Goes to Rome ("She went to Rome, and Rome is real, isn't it?"), and The Carpetbaggers ("It's just full of social problems"). Aldrich suggested the following chart as a guide to literature selection:

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[1] Ibid., p. 626.

HOW TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN SERIOUS AND SUPERFICIAL WRITING

Serious	Superficial
Definition: 1. Writing that requires philosophical thought by both reader and writer. 2. Writing that deals with deep moral problems of life that affect people permanently.	Definition: 1. Writing that deals with the obvious or easily seen. 2. Writing that deals with temporary problems.
Purpose: To present a universal truth about life as that author sees it.	Purpose: To make the reader's dreams come true.
Mark: 1. At the end, the reader will still have to make decisions about the way the author solved the problems. 2. Characters make major personality changes slowly and, sometimes, painfully.	Mark: 1. A God-like figure who solves everyone's problems. At the end all the reader has to do is sigh with satisfaction. 2. Characters make major personality changes easily and quickly.
Life Expectancy: A well-written serious book has a good chance of being a permanent addition to the literature of a country and/or world. It can sell immediately after publication or be ignored until many years after the author is dead.	Life Expectancy: A well-written superficial book usually has a temporary, although well-paid, existence. It can be tremendously popular for a short time and the author gets as well-heeled as income taxes permit, then be forgotten just as fast.[1]

V. VARIOUS REPORTING DEVICES

Once the teacher has accepted the philosophical basis for assigning the novel and decided the number, quality and

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[1]Pearl Aldrich, "A New Method of Evaluating Fiction," English Journal, LIV (November, 1965), 744-745.

type, he is faced with a very practical problem--that of finding a reporting technique. Surely most teachers of English would agree with Inhelder's statement that "book reports are sadly in need of revision."[1]

In criticizing the "usual" book report, Hunt stated:

> The commonest way [to spoil a novel once it has been assigned] is to tell the student to read it privately and then fill out a questionnaire concerning it. If the student actually reads the novel before he fills out the questionnaire, he either does so because he likes to read anyway, or he has not yet learned the uses of the master plots.[2]

Hunt examined the "stock questions" which appear in many standard book report forms. Using such novels as Great Expectations and Pride and Prejudice, he demonstrated the ineffective aspects of these stock questions as tools for determining the student's understanding and appreciation of the concepts existing in the individual novel.[3]

Carlin reminded his readers that teachers, too, dread the standard book reports. However, he felt that "too many competing forces tug at the student" to have the teacher believe that students will read extensively on a voluntary basis. He stated:

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[1]Lucile Inhelder, "A Varied Approach to Book Reports," English Journal, XLVIII (March, 1959), 141.

[2]Hunt, op. cit., p. 602

[3]Ibid., p. 606.

> While every device to encourage the love of reading should be employed, the compulsory requirement of a specific number of books to be read and reported on continues to be an essential part of the English curriculum.[1]

Carlin expressed concern about some of the suggestions in professional literature that attempt to solve the problem of the "dull" book report with methods which fall short of sensible objectives. He stated:

> On the silly side is the type of book report which takes the form of drawing a picture of the loom such as Silas Marner might have used. If the picture is a supplement to a genuine study of what the novel has to say about people and about life, it is wholesome indeed. If the picture is the reader's total response to the book, it is too little to be accepted.[2]

O'Dea also recognized the need for the book report. Like Carlin, he was concerned over some of the "ingenious schemes" for individualizing it.

> I look with suspicion upon schemes which attempt to make book reports "fun", e. g., literary coke parties, presumably the bicarbonated version of the eighteenth century London coffeehouse--or TV quiz shows--surely more "rigged" than the real programs were.[3]

Criticisms of the "standard book report," "the uninspired book report" and the "gimmick" book report were expressed in many articles. Rowland, however, in reporting

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[1]Jerome Carlin, "Your Next Book Report. . . .," English Journal, L (January, 1961), 16.

[2]Ibid., p. 17.

[3]Paul W. O'Dea, "Senior Book Reports--Again," English Journal, L (February, 1961), 98.

on the efforts of a workshop in creating new, effective, methods of book reports, stated:

> It was my contention that if a teacher sets his mind to it, countless variations on the normally routine and formal book reports could be created.[1]

The committee, attacking the problem of stimulation in book report assignments, "within three hours had come up with a huge list of variations in all book report categories . . . the bulk of them clever and exciting."[2]

Inhelder attempted to vitalize her system of assigning book reports through the development of a "highly individualized program."[3] Six books were assigned during the semester. Students were told that the first book report would be oral and would require no preparation other than the reading of their book. She then prepared forty questions which would "demand personal recommendation, justification of the title, and emotional reaction with emphasis on the past, present and future."[4] During the class period students were given several questions pertinent to their novel. Responses were given orally; when inadequate responses were given, individual conferences were arranged.

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[1] Howard S. Rowland, "Alternatives for Book Reports," English Journal, LI (February, 1962), 106.

[2] Ibid., p. 107.

[3] Inhelder, op. cit., p. 141.

[4] Ibid.

The second book report was handled in the same manner. Students improved their responses as a result of the experience with the first report. Evidence indicated that students read their novels more critically in anticipation of the questions which might be asked in class.

The third and fourth book reports were panels or symposiums, with questions asked by the other class members. By this time many of the students had read the same books, as a result of the interest created by the oral reports. By the fifth book report, students were vying with one another to make their presentations entertaining as well as instructive. TV panel shows became the models for these reports.

The sixth review emphasized writing. Each student wrote a review, which he read to the class. Many were illustrated and all were displayed on the bulletin board.

Inhelder felt that this approach met the individual needs of her class. She and the librarian helped the students in the selection of books which would be interesting to them and were within their reading range. The forty questions used in the first two reports allowed for more individualized instruction. Inhelder emphasized questions on human relationships with the less able students. As an enrichment exercise, she originated a book review publication "for teen-agers by teen-agers."[1]

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[1] Ibid., p. 144.

Hunt, critical of the stock questions in most book reports, suggested five canons to be kept in mind when teachers are preparing questions to be used as the basis of book reports:

1. The question should take the reader back into the novel more deeply, rather than out of it.
2. It should be narrow enough to be exhausted in the space available.
3. It should be neither self-evident nor intangible; just challenging.
4. If it is about a reader's response to the novel, then let it be about a normal response, not an imaginary response.
5. It should not all depend on the meaning of a term only vaguely defined, like a "real" character.[1]

O'Dea presented a more traditional comment on book reports. He defended a type of carefully selected book report forms. He reminded his readers that criticism has not been leveled at all conventional book reports but only at those in which a student is obliged to do little more than establish, either in writing or speech, that he has read the book. He felt that teachers should review the following facts about teen-agers before assigning book reports:

1. Most teen-agers have not liked, do not, and will not ever like to write meaningful evaluations of their reading;
2. Most teen-agers like to read but are not trained to get the most out of challenging reading material; and

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[1]Hunt, op. cit., p. 606.

3. Nearly all teen-agers like to talk about their reading even to a teacher, provided they are not subjected to an inquisition.[1]

In view of these facts, O'Dea has developed three plans for reporting on novels. He gives these plans to his students at the beginning of the year. On the date of the book report he tells the students which plan they are to use in reporting on their books. He stated:

> All book reports are written in class inasmuch as I like to subject seniors to time as well as spatial pressures in most of their writing assignments. Besides, outside help is virtually eliminated.[2]

O'Dea's plans are listed below:

PLAN I

1. Summarize the story of the novel. (200-250 words).
2. What is the main problem of the book? How is it solved, if at all?
3. Name two minor characters and describe their function, that is, not just what they do, but what they contribute to the book as a whole. (50-75 words).

PLAN II

1. What is the high point in the book? Why? Be specific and detailed.
2. In the course of the story do the main characters change as a result of their experiences, or because of the influence of other characters, or are they essentially the same at the end of the book as they were at the beginning? Discuss. (100-150 words).

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[1] O'Dea, op. cit., p. 98.

[2] Ibid., p. 99.

PLAN III

1. Why did the author begin the book (i.e. the first chapter) as he or she did? (50-75 words).
2. With what main problem is the main character (or characters) faced? Is it a conflict with another individual? with an idea? with society? within himself? with nature? or what? Explain in detail. (75-125 words).
3. State the main idea of the novel in one sentence.[1]

Throughout the year O'Dea provides periods for book recommendations and arranges book panels from his coded record of books read by each student. These oral "commentaries" are ungraded; however, they are useful in providing some guide to future book selections by fellow classmates. O'Dea is not certain his method would be suitable for the non-college-bound, but he stated:

> What I am certain of is that the procedure [described above] has provided my college preparatory students with specific guide lines to plumb that often amorphous but always wonderful world of good reading.[2]

Appleby and Conner, in defending the individual book report conference, attributed the success of this program to the following code of procedures:

1. The teacher has read or skimmed most of the books that the students read.
2. The teacher must resist the temptation to recommend a "better quality" book than the one the student has just finished reading simply for the sake of "quality." The next book read must be read because it is of interest to the student, not because it

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[1] Ibid., p. 105.

[2] Ibid.

is of interest to the teacher.
3. The teacher must resist the temptation to present any planned classroom activity which prevents individual reading and book conferences.
4. There is no specific level where reading must begin. The individual reading level is dictated by one's interest and ability.
5. The basis for a book conference can be a difference of opinion between the student and teacher and may end with unresolved differences.
6. A summary of the book's plot (oral or written) is probably a waste of time for all but the slowest of students.
7. The teacher must be supportive in the conference and avoid making derogatory evaluations of books which have meant much to the student.
8. The teacher must leave each conference feeling the student has gained a clearer understanding of the book and his program.[1]

Carlin saw a place in the book report program for both the imaginative "fun" form and the serious analytic report. He felt the choice will be dictated from the selection of book, the character of the class, and the current center of interest in the daily class work. He suggested such forms as:

1. An analysis by a man in the future
2. The diary of a main character
3. A letter written in the role of book character
4. Describing the characters
5. Written analysis from a specific viewpoint[2]

Rowland also felt that there is room for many types of book reports. He believed that the reports "must arouse the student's curiosity and titillate his senses or else

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[1]Appleby and Conner, op. cit., p. 612.

[2]Carlin, op. cit., p. 106.

we have not only failed in the [book report] assignment, we have very likely ruined a reading assignment."[1] He suggested such variations of the book report as the following:

1. Change Setting. Imagine the character in the book in a different setting, for example twentieth-century Harlem. Change mood, time, or setting and show how it affects characters and plot.

2. TV. How would Alfred Hitchcock present your novel on his program? How would it be presented on Twilight Zone?

3. Court Trial. Create a situation where a character in a novel is on trial in court for his treatment of another character or his improper behavior. Write a summary speech as prosecutor or defense attorney.

4. Letter. Write a letter to foreign student discussing why this book is representative or not representative of American society.

5. Life Story. Imagine "Life" magazine doing a feature story on the book. Describe the photographs they would take, and write the captions for each.[2]

Grimsley summarized the place of the book report in the English curriculum as follows:

> Most students have a real desire for knowledge, and if they can be helped to develop a sincere love for literature, then the book report should present no real problem. If they [book reports] are integrated with the study of literature and used as a tool for both written and oral composition, they are accepted as a definite part of the program and not questioned. . . . Let us make use of this extremely resourceful tool in our

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[1] Rowland, op. cit., p. 111.

[2] Ibid., pp. 111-113.

> teaching of English to help develop a love of reading, a critical understanding of literature, and an ability to write effectively.[1]

VI. GROUPING TECHNIQUES

Nearly all professional writers were in agreement that discussion is an important element in the meaningful study of literature. While short pieces of literature may be discussed within an entire class, it becomes difficult to discuss the novel in the same manner. The varying abilities and interests of the students as well as the length and complexity of the novel combine to present an instructional problem for the teacher who wishes his students to read widely and well.

As Masbeck stated:

> What is needed, clearly, is an approach by which students will not only learn to read a variety of teacher-chosen novels under careful supervision, but which will also develop in each student certain systematic habits in reading and analysis which will enable him to read any novel more perceptively.[2]

Masback felt that grouping students into small study and discussion groups could best accomplish these ends. He divided his class into four groups, assigning each group a novel which he felt would both challenge and interest.

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[1] Juliet Grimsley, "Book Reports Can Be Helpful," English Journal, LII (March, 1963), 116-117.

[2] Masback, op. cit., p. 278.

Groups were guided by sets of study and discussion questions. Group meetings of a half hour each were allowed. Each group presented a panel upon the completion of their study. By the end of the semester each student had an "intimate acquaintance with four novels."[1]

> More important than that, he has developed skills and knowledge which will enable him to read any novel more intelligently. Step by step, he has learned to recognize and deal with plot, setting, characterization, and theme in a novel; he has confidence in his ability to do this because he has actually seen the evidence of his increasing mastery, and he feels that he has learned this for himself and from his fellow students rather than from the teacher.[2]

Berry, faced with teaching the "unwanted overflow" from other English classes, found "problem-solving groups" to be an effective method of teaching communication skills. Students were given the Mooney Problem Check List. Groups were formed of students with similar problems. Students began studies by reading non-fiction books designed to help the adolescent. Later, books chosen with student interest in mind were included. Student interest remained high as mature novels were introduced as extensions of thematic interest. Berry stated:

> At appropriate times, I talked with them about effective methods of small group work, how to conduct a

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[1] Ibid., p. 279.

[2] Ibid.

> panel discussion, and effective speaking. As to the latter, the tape recorder was an aid, and group criticism called attention to their mistakes and sharpened their use of words and terms. The classroom became a co-operative venture. Group leaders, observers, and recorders kept the focus on goals.[1]

To those who wonder if the English class should dwell on the personal problems of students, Berry answered:

> Guidance begins with the students where they are, but it does not leave them there. You recall "The Chambered Nautilus" that Holmes wrote about, how it kept on growing and expanding and building and readjusting itself. Holmes suggested that that's the way people are, and those of us who practice guidance in English education have found it so.[2]

Carlsen felt that the development of international understanding, "one of the most important functions of the English program," can be undertaken in a group learning situation. Prejudices, both national and international, break down as students read and discuss literature presenting other cultures. Group presentations allow the class to widen their experience.

> In all of the things that have been suggested, the teacher's basic aim is simple. He is trying to make the students less provincial, a fundamental of all good education. He is trying to take the student from the narrow confines of the immediate community in which he lives and to give him the feeling that he lives in the world community.[3]

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[1] Elizabeth Berry, "Group Guidance in the English Class," The Clearing House, XXXI (December, 1960), 567.

[2] Ibid., p. 568.

[3] Carlsen, op. cit., pp. 419-437.

The Curriculum Planning and Development Committee of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals endorsed the use of groups in the study of literature in the following statement:

> The literature programs for classes selected according to ability should differ qualitatively, not merely quantitively. Heterogeneous classes should be divided into sub-groups to provide for study appropriate to the different concerns and levels of student ability. Special honors groups, class seminars, and literary clubs can help provide stimulation for especially talented students.[1]

Giltinan felt that grouping was an answer for those teachers who were "faced with the dilemma of wanting students to think for themselves and yet wanting them to think along acceptable patterns."[2] After using a system of grouping in her literature classes for several years, she made the following observations:

1. Students do not necessarily have to be closely supervised in discussion but can come up with some excellent ideas completely on their own if given a chance to talk to each other. Careful planning is essential.

2. Students are more frank and honest when discussing topics with fellow students without the teacher's presence.

3. The discussion groups teach students to express

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[1]"English Language Arts in the Comprehensive Secondary School," The 1959-60 Major Project of the NASSP Committee on Curriculum Planning and Development, An English Teacher's Reader, op. cit., p. 283.

[2]Betty Giltinan, "We Solved the Problem of Size," English Journal, LI (February, 1963), 89-93.

themselves more logically, more coherently and more economically, and to make better use of their time.

4. Students can get to know each other better by participating in different groups within the class.

5. Higher-ability students and those of lower ability seem to enrich each other's experiences when working together in some small group. The better students develop understanding and often get new ideas from the others, and the lower-ability students gain better work habits and new ideas, too.

6. Even the shy student learns that expressing his own ideas among people interested in the same things is a profitable experience.[1]

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[1] Ibid.

CHAPTER III

A SPECIMEN BOOK REPORT PANEL UNIT

I. INTRODUCTION

Much criticism has been leveled at the teaching of the longer literary works in today's schools. Experts have said that the selections are incomprehensible to the poorer student;[1] too watered down for the average student;[2] not challenging enough for the brighter student;[3] too far removed from the interest of today's student;[4] too geared to the middle class student;[5] and too anemic for today's realistic youth.[6]

The teacher who teaches the novel thoroughly often turns "wonder to jadedness" as he "strains the work"[7] through his consciousness and makes such topics as the author's life or the milieu in which he wrote as important

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[1] Graham, op. cit., p. 629.

[2] Miles, op. cit., p. 172.

[3] Hartung, op. cit., p. 299.

[4] Tovatt, op. cit., p. 530.

[5] Granite, op. cit., p. 585.

[6] Burton, op. cit., p. 262.

[7] Alm, op. cit., p. 263.

as the literary work itself.

On the other hand, the teacher who attempts to individualize his approach by selecting or allowing students to select individual works according to their interest and ability often sacrifices "depth and direction in his teaching."[1] The student involved in this approach often has little opportunity to discuss his book with the teacher or with other students. His only response to the book may be in the form of an "unimaginative book report."[2]

While criticizing the standard book report which does little more than establish that the student read the book, many experts expressed a belief that the book report, if well handled, can be a useful tool in the teaching of literature to help develop a love of reading, a critical understanding of literature and an ability to write more effectively.[3]

What is needed is an approach by which the student will not only have the advantage of selecting literature geared to his own ability and interest but will also have the advantage of the direction and discussion of the common reading program. The writer believes that the book report

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[1] Masbeck, op. cit., pp. 278-280.

[2] Rozsnafszky, op. cit., p. 1075.

[3] Grimsley, op. cit., pp. 116-117.

panel offers a possibility for accomplishing goals.

The book report panel as used in the writer's classes is a thematic approach to literature which takes into consideration the various levels of interest and ability of the students, as well as their need for direction from the teacher and the advantages to be derived from group discussion.

If handled effectively, the book report panel can provide a medium for the development, the maintenance, and the exercise of the basic communication skills. To fulfill his obligations as a member of a book report panel, a student must read and he must understand, interpret, and evaluate what he reads.

In choosing themes for book panels, the criteria suggested by Miles have been taken into consideration. Miles stated:

> This is the first criterion for shaping the thematic content of the literary curriculum: It should present themes and problems which are so central to the human situation that they constantly recur in literature.
>
> The second criterion for selecting the thematic content is that it must be important to the student. The course must accommodate the pressing concerns of the adolescent and enable him to consider the questions he is probably asking himself as he reaches maturity.[1]

Once the theme for a certain panel has been established

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[1]Miles, op. cit., p. 172.

the teacher chooses five literary works to be assigned as basic reading selections, with each student expected to read at least one of these. In selecting these works the teacher must consider the needs of the particular class, keeping in mind that the goal is "to raise the level of reading"[1] while at the same time remembering that the literature should be "intelligible, enjoyable, and significant"[2] to the student.

The class then is introduced to the theme of the unit. Each student is given a list of five literary works. After the teacher has given a short introductory statement about each book, each student is asked to choose the book he wishes to read as his basic reading selection during the unit. He is also asked to list a second and a third choice. The teacher forms the panel, keeping in mind each student's choice of book, his maturity, and his ability as indicated by his interest, standardized tests and teacher evaluation.

After the panels are formed, the students of each panel meet periodically, both in and out of class, to discuss the work, guided by discussion questions provided by the teacher, and to plan their in-class presentation of the work. They are given a class period a week in which they

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[1] Freedom and Discipline, op. cit., p. 49.

[2] Miles, op. cit., p. 170.

may read their assigned books. During this reading period, the teacher has the opportunity to work with individual students. Bright students are given individual written assignments which may require extensive reading from the secondary source list. The average student is encouraged to read at least one book other than his panel book and may be expected to write some type of comparison paper. The poorer student, unless he indicates that he wishes to read further, will probably receive some type of assignment which will allow him to read his panel book more intensively; perhaps he will be asked to write a character study.

All thematic statements for these papers are developed cooperately by student and teacher during individual conferences, at which time the teacher has an opportunity to determine how well the student is understanding his book, and, if necessary, to help him with his reading skills.

Rozsnafszky suggested that the teacher formulate the thesis statement for the first paper, showing the student how to narrow a subject and focus the material into a unified composition. The student, for his next assignment, will then submit thesis statements for approval to the teacher. Rozsnafszky felt that this type of "book analysis" can lead toward critical thinking and mature writing.[1]

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[1]Rozsnafszky, op. cit., p. 1075.

In-class writing assignments are given in which the student explores the general theme of the unit. He is encouraged to use direct references from the book he has been reading.

The unit culminates in the panel presentation of each work. Each group is encouraged to make use of audio-visual aids and community resources in its presentations. The group then evaluates the effectiveness of its presentation by testing the rest of the class and by asking for written evaluations from the class.

The last period of the unit is spent in discussion of the effectiveness of the communication skills displayed in the presentation. Students are made aware of the difficulties inherent in the oral communication process and of methods to overcome these difficulties to some extent.

In the process of panel preparation and presentation, writing, speaking, and listening skills are developed and the student is given opportunity for the exercise of these skills. This exercise is not performed in isolation or through the use of dull and repetitive exercises but in real-life situations through group action and reaction. In addition, research skills are necessitated if the approach to the literary work is either historical or sociopsychological.

Thematic units such as the following might be used

throughout the school year to give continuity to the year's study:

1. Recognition of Self,
2. Recognition of Social Problems: The Racial Question,
3. Concepts of Social Order,
4. Recognition of Cultural Heritage.

The writer selected Recognition of Social Problems: The Racial Question as the subject of the specimen book report panel unit because of its pertinence to today's living. Both Hipple[1] and Babcock[2] provided listing of selected works whose general theme is the race question, and both agree that the need for understanding in this area is critical.

Although this unit may be used in grades ten through twelve in nearly any racially integrated or non-integrated school by varying the selection of works to be used, the writer recommended this particular unit for use at the tenth grade level in the non-integrated suburban schools. As a result of the lessening of discrimination in housing as well as the government's stand on full participation in integration, many of these schools will be receiving their first

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[1]Hipple, op. cit., pp. 194-196.

[2]David Babcock, "Understanding Prejudice," The Teacher's Guide to Media and Methods, III (April, 1967), 16-17.

Negro students. By giving white students an opportunity to look into the lives and problems of the Negro as he is presented in literature, it would be hoped that the transition from a non-integrated to an integrated society would be facilitated.

II. SPECIMEN BOOK REPORT PANEL UNIT

The following is a specimen book report panel unit:

Theme: Recognition of Social Problems: The Racial Question.

Procedure: Preparation of book report panels on literary works which deal with various aspects of the racial question.

Purpose: To help the student better understand the problems inherent in our society, particularly in the area of the relationship between the races, through intensive reading of selected literary works.

Skill Objectives of the Unit: To help the student

1. To learn to read and listen critically;
2. To learn to speak and write effectively;
3. To gain an understanding of the ways in which human beings act, think, and feel;
4. To learn to draw inferences and deductions;
5. To learn and to apply principles of logical thinking;
6. To learn and to apply principles of good usage and mechanics;
7. To use literature as a source of spiritual and aesthetic satisfaction;
8. To learn to appreciate the vicarious experiences literature provides;

9. To develop skill in the use of reference material;
10. To learn to organize materials of oral and written expression logically and effectively;
11. To improve reading skills at every level of development;
12. To expand vocabulary comprehension and usage through wide and varied experiences in listening, speaking, reading and writing;
13. To speak convincingly before an audience;
14. To give expression to inherent creative talent as it can manifest itself in the language arts.[1]

Primary Bibliography: Works actually assigned to the panels.

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn	Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain)
Raisin in the Sun	Lorraine Hansberry
To Kill a Mockingbird	Harper Lee
Black Boy	Richard Wright
Too Late the Phalarope	Alan Paton

Titles selected as part of the primary bibliography will vary according to need, class interest and ability, and area of coverage. Titles from the secondary bibliography may be added to or substituted for works in the primary bibliography at the discretion of the teacher.

Secondary Bibliography: Collateral Reading.

Works concerned with prejudice against the Negro.

Kingsblood Royal	Sinclair Lewis
Cry, the Beloved Country	Alan Paton
Lawd Today	Richard Wright
Native Son	Richard Wright
Eight Men	Richard Wright
Peaceable Lane	Keith Wheeler
Strange Fruit	Lillian Smith

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[1] Committee on Language Arts of the Des Moines Public Schools, Language Arts, Senior High School (Des Moines, 1958-1960).

Blues for Mr. Charlie	James Baldwin
Go Tell It on the Mountain	James Baldwin
Intruder in the Dust	William Faulkner
Black Like Me	John Griffin

Works concerned with prejudice against other racial, religious, or ethnic groups.

A Jew of Malta	Christopher Marlowe
Merchant of Venice	William Shakespeare
Diary of a Young Girl	Anne Frank
The Wall	John Hersey
This Is My God	Herman Wouk
Marjorie Morningstar	Herman Wouk
The Deputy	Rolf Hochhuth
Exodus	Leon Uris
Mila 18	Leon Uris
Franny and Zooey	J. D. Salinger
Christ in Concrete	Pietra DiDonato
Studs Lonigah Trilogy	James T. Farrell
The Last Hurrah	Edwin O'Connor
The Edge of Sadness	Edwin O'Connor
A Tree Grows in Brooklyn	Betty Smith
Maggie-Now	Betty Smith
Father and Son	James T. Farrell
The Cardinal	Henry M. Robinson
Passage to India	E. M. Forster

All students on the panels are encouraged to read other works, both from the primary and the secondary bibliographies, and the more advanced students are expected to read more than one selection.

Form and Order of the Unit: The unit may be organized as follows:

1. Introduction of the unit;
2. Assignment of the basic reading texts;
3. Selection of the panels;
4. Organization of the panel meetings;

5. Preparation of study guides for the individual groups;
6. Assignment of theme topics:
   a. In-class themes;
   b. Individual theme topics;
7. Preparation of the book report panels;
8. Final discussion and evaluation.

III. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNIT

Introduction of the Unit

Activities such as the following may be used to introduce the unit. They may be varied or eliminated at the discretion of the teacher.

Preparation of the bulletin board. Since the emphasis of the unit is the breaking down of the stereotype ideas of the Negro by giving the student the opportunity to know the Negro through literature, the bulletin board could challenge the student with the following question, "Do they all look alike?" Beneath the question could be a chain of identical brown paper dolls. At one side of the board could be a collage composed of Negro faces cut from magazines and newspapers. The collage should illustrate very graphically that indeed they do not look alike. Prior to the unit, the teacher might ask the students to help search for the Negro faces; in this search the student is made

aware of articles concerning the racial problems. This bulletin board may be useful in the discussion of stereotypes. The multitude of faces symbolically illustrates that the question, "Who is the Negro and what does he want?" is an extremely complex one.

Administration of the informal prejudice test. A simple test, based on student reaction to "charged words," may be used to arouse student interest. Without telling the student that he is being given a test on his prejudices and/or biases, the teacher may ask the students to read the following words, marking + if he feels a favorable response to the word and - if he feels a negative response to the word:

a. homework	j. executive	s. Joan of Arc
b. communism	k. NAACP	t. Elizabeth Taylor
c. K. K. K.	l. yellow	u. honkie
d. C. I. A.	m. Cadillac	v. civil rights
e. labor union	n. red	w. capitalism
f. comrade	o. hippy	x. boy scout
g. white	p. curly	y. evolution
h. socialist state	q. democratic	z. F. B. I.
i. mustang	r. Berkeley	

After the test has been administered the teacher may ask the student to look at his own responses in an effort to determine what his own prejudices and biases are. The

student may find a consistent pattern which will allow him to see his personal or economic preferences. Many of the words lend themselves well to an introduction of the denotative and connotative aspects of language.

Discussion of the semantics of prejudice. Referring to Hayakawa's language in Thought and Action, the teacher might define for students Hayakawa's concept of "loaded words," "snarl words," and "purr words."[1] Students can give examples of these, perhaps locating them in context in the daily paper or in magazines. The brighter students might attempt to create a Hayakawan type of conjugation illustrating racial points of view. For example, "We are implementing the Civil Rights Program as fast as possible;" "you have slowed down your Civil Rights Program;" "They are dragging their heels." Harris gave the following example: "We were making a demonstration; you were disturbing the peace; they were causing a riot."[2]

Discussion of stereotypes. Using television programs and old movies which are frequently seen on television as evidence, the teacher may trace the stereotype cycle with

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[1]S. I. Hayakawa, Language in Thought and Action (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1949), pp. 44-46.

[2]Sidney Harris, "Those Antics with Semantics," The Des Moines Register, July 18, 1967, p. 6.

the students. For example, Tonto, the stereotyped noble savage of Lone Ranger fame, which the students may still see in cartoon form on Saturday children's shows, was replaced by television's attempt to create a realistic Indian such as Cochise in Broken Arrow. The 1966-67 season introduced two anti-stereotype indians, Pink Cloud in Rango and Wild Eagle in F Troop.

These two satirize the earlier stereotype. From this discussion, the teacher may wish to lead the class into an analysis of the stereotype Negro image, its causes and effects.

Use of audio-visual aids. The teacher may wish to use various audio-visual aids to introduce the unit. Boundary Lines by Philip Stapp, for example, illustrates some of the connotations the word line may have socially by means of animated symbols and puppet-like figures. For Des Moines area students Gordon Gammack Talks to Dick Gregory, a kinescope of a local television station, which presents a discussion of the important national issues involved in racial strife, might be very meaningful, since many of the students are familiar with Gammack. The writer does not recommend films and recordings which tend to glorify the Negro. Films and recordings illustrating the jazz ability of Louis Armstrong, the athletic ability of

Jesse Owens, or the creative ability of George Washington Carver may well inspire Negroes as well as white people, but they often contribute to further stereotyping (all Negroes have rhythm; No wonder we can't win, look at all the Negroes on their team!) and to over-simplify the problems of Negro achievement ("If Carver could get ahead with all that was against him, surely today's Negro, if he had any gumption, could succeed with all this help from the government").

Selection of the panel. The teacher forms the panels from the students' list of choices, taking into consideration the ability and maturity of the student as well as his individual choice. Although there are advantages in homogeneous grouping by ability, there are certain advantages also in allowing students to be in groups above or below their reading level if warranted by other considerations. As Giltinan stated:

> Higher ability students and those of lower ability seem to enrich each other's experiences when working together in the same small group. The better students develop understanding and often get new ideas from the other, and the lower-ability students gain better work habits and new ideas, too. . . .[1]

The basic consideration in grouping seems to be that the student not be put in a group in which he cannot succeed.

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[1]Giltinan, op. cit., 89-93.

It would be further hoped that each student would find his group challenging in many ways.

Organization of the panel meeting. Before the class breaks into groups, it might be well for the teacher to review the function of group discussion, to discuss the problems which sometimes prevent effective group participation, and to suggest ways of making the groups more productive. After the books are assigned the class breaks into the various groups to select a chairman and secretary. The group has two basic tasks. First the group must study and interpret the book, and second the group must find an effective method of presenting to the class the book or the basic problem the book represents. The teacher will provide class time for meeting once per week; however, it is expected that the students will find other times to meet out of class to plan and practice their panel presentation.

Assignment of the basic reading texts. To help the student choose which of the basic reading texts he wishes to read, the teacher might present capsule reviews similar to the following:

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn is the story of Huck Finn and his friendship with Jim, a runaway Negro slave. They have a series of adventures, some exciting, some funny, as they drift down the Mississippi on a raft from

St. Petersburg, Missouri, to Pikesville, Louisiana. There are a lynching, a confidence game, a wild show, and an attempted escape. Tom Sawyer both complicates and straightens out the situation.

To Kill a Mockingbird is the story of Atticus Finch and his two children Scout and Jim as they discover deep-seated prejudice in their small southern town. Atticus' attempt to secure justice for his Negro client, who has been unjustly accused of rape, is mixed with the mystery of Boo Radley, the sharp-tongue wit of Miss Maudie, and the colorful comments of Scout on such subjects as education, manners and "family."

Raisin in the Sun is a prize-winning play which deals with a Chicago Negro family that plans to use an insurance check to move into an all-white neighborhood. The feisty college daughter, the ever-patient but determined daughter-in-law, and the unrealistic explosive son give Mama a hard time as she tries to do the right thing by all of them.

Too Late the Phalarope is the story of a young South African police lieutenant, idolized by his community, who violates one of the strictest laws of the country governing the relations between black and white. The tension mounts as Pieter, the young lieutenant, moves closer and closer to disaster. This story is an excellent psychological study of a man and the culture which has molded his character.

Black Boy takes the reader into the early tortured life of a southern Negro, Richard Wright, the prizewinning author. It tells of his struggles, not only for his own personal goals but also for his very existence, as he escapes to the relative freedom of the North through the dangerous obstacle course of life in the South.

The teacher should be ready to answer general questions about the author and the work. The student may wish to know if the work is on most college preparatory lists, if it is a current work, or if the author has written other important works.

Preparation of study guides for individual groups. To help give the students direction in their reading the teacher will give each student a study guide for his novel. The type of study guide will be determined by the nature of the work and the general ability of the group studying the work. Study guides will range from the chapter-by-chapter type to the type which will demand critical analysis, guided by secondary sources. The individual answers to these study guide questions will be discussed within the group. In this way the student has an opportunity to express himself in a written form and then to test that expression within the group. In defending his answer, he learns to express himself orally. The following assignment of novels and study guides might be made:

Group I.

To Kill a Mockingbird may be read and enjoyed by students with low ability as well as by those students with average and high ability. However, for the low ability student the abrupt change of time and scene presents some difficulty. Although most students may follow the main plot, some students are confused by the introduction of the many characters. With a fairly extensive study guide, however, this book could be assigned to the low-average ability reading group. (Such a guide is included in the appendix of this study.)

Group II.

Black Boy can also be read and enjoyed by students with a wide range of ability, but the subject matter and the language of the work might limit its use to the mature reader. The study guide might be useful in directing the student's attention to the forces which control the life of the southern Negro. Examples of the questions which might be used are as follows:

1. Why is it so difficult for Negroes to leave the South?
2. Why is it almost impossible for Negroes in Jackson to get ahead?
3. Formulate a code which you could give Wright for getting along with the white people in the South

at that period in history.

4. What personal characteristics and environmental factors contributed to Wright's inability to stay in the South and his subsequent escape to the North?
5. Discuss the Southern Negro's self-image from the evidence in the novel.
6. Discuss the place of religion, according to Wright, in the lives of the Negroes.

Group III.

Raisin in the Sun might be used successfully with an average or high average group. Although it is fairly easy to read, with the possible exception of some of Beneatha's lines, the average reader may have difficulty in seeing the significance of certain props, words and lines. (These would be clear to him, in all probability, if he were to see and hear the play presented.) The study guide would call attention to these items. The following questions could be used for this purpose:

1. How does the author suggest the socio-economic condition of the family?
2. What significance do the eggs and fifty cents have in the first act?
3. What is an "assimilationist"?
4. What does Asagai mean when he says Beneatha "mutilates" her hair?

5. Why does the family laugh when Mama says, "That's my way of expressing myself"?
6. Why does Mama insist that Travis remain in the room when Walter talks to the representative of the "Improvement committee"?
7. What do the holes in the living room rug represent to Mama?

Group IV.

Too Late the Phalarope might be assigned to a mature, high-ability group. The foreign words and the almost Biblical quality of the language, which add to the dramatic quality of the story, could be stumbling blocks to the average or below-average reader. Although most students might understand the plot on a literal level, the symbolic quality of the novel, which causes many critics to consider it a parable of South Africa, could best be appreciated by the high-ability group. The book lends itself to the historical and sociopsychological approach. The following discussion questions are examples of ones that could be used to lead the reader into a deeper understanding and appreciation of the novel:

1. This novel is said to be a parable of South Africa. Discuss.
2. Discuss the cultural influences which contribute to Pieter's disaster.

3. Trace the various incidents which lead to the estrangement of Pieter and his father.
4. The narrator again and again accuses herself for allowing the disaster to happen. Trace the various points in Pieter's life at which time she could have changed the course of events.
5. In what way is society responsible for Pieter's wife's attitude?
6. What is the symbolism of the Phalarope?

Group V.

The inclusion of The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn in the unit gives the unit extra flexibility. This novel may be used at various ability levels. Study guides might be developed on several levels for this particular work. The guide selected to be used would depend upon the needs of a particular class. For a low to average group a detailed chapter-by-chapter study guide, such as the one used with To Kill a Mockingbird, might be useful. For a high ability group the study guide might emphasize the social criticism in the novel. For the latter group, questions such as the following might be used:

1. Discuss Twain's criticism of:
   a. Religion
   b. Education
   c. Royalty

d. Middle class values

e. Romantic adventure novels

f. Slavery

2. Discuss Twain's treatment of women in the novel.

3. What human qualities does Twain seem to point out as being worthy of admiration?

4. Discuss Twain's treatment of Jim in the first and last chapters compared with his treatment of Jim from the time he meets Huck on the island until Jim is captured.

Assignment of theme topics. Two types of themes may be written: (1) the in-class theme, which may be written about the unit in general and supported by the individual's experience as well as reading, and (2) the individual theme assignments, in which the student analyzes some aspect of the panel book. The thesis statements for these papers must be submitted to the teacher for approval.

1. The in-class theme. The following assignment might be given: Respond to one of the following statements in a well-written theme. You may agree or disagree with the statement. Underline your topic sentence.

A. If he wants to, a young person can usually inoculate himself against prejudice.

B. "Ignorance is the twin of bigotry."

C. "Since all humans belong to the same species, the motives behind separation of the races are as illogical as they are complex."

D. "The use of mob violence in many cities by the Negroes indicates that they are not ready for full participation in our society."

2. The individual theme assignments. The following statements are examples of ones which students might use to develop well-unified book analyses. In the individual essay assignment, the student is expected to support his thesis statement, which has been previously approved by the teacher, by giving direct evidence from his reading. The following examples of thesis statements are arranged in order of the difficulty of their development. Sentences one through ten are used with one book; sentences eleven through fifteen are used with two books by students who are capable of handling contrasts and comparisons; sentences sixteen through nineteen are used by superior students who have read several books and who are capable of using secondary sources to develop the thesis statements:

1. Harper Lee, in her novel To Kill a Mockingbird, presents an ironic picture of the women and men of Maycomb--collectively guilty of the murder of an innocent man, but individually good, generous people.
2. In Black Boy, Richard Wright reveals both pity and contempt for the Negro who becomes the victim of the white world.
3. Although Ruth in Raisin in the Sun is not the major character, her quiet determination influences the actions of each of the other characters.
4. In Raisin in the Sun, Hansberry creates one of the most tragic moments in modern theater when Walter finds that he has foolishly allowed the family money to be stolen.
5. Mama, although she doesn't know all of Beneatha's college expressions, illustrates throughout the play that she does know and understand her children.
6. Huck Finn's desire to be loyal to the white community conflicts with his desire to be a true friend to Jim.
7. Although The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn is regarded by some as a picaresque novel, Huck is too sentimental ever to be a real rascal.

8. The double nature of Pieter, the main character in Too Late the Phalarope, represents the conflict which exists in South Africa.

9. In his autobiographical novel, Black Boy, Richard Wright's hatred of his father is tempered by his (Wright's) later knowledge of the social and economic forces which contributed to his father's actions.

10. Jakob Van Vlaanderen, in Too Late the Phalarope, represents the tradition-oriented patriarchal society, whose unyielding nature will destroy South Africa.

11. The use of foreshadowing in To Kill a Mockingbird and Too Late the Phalarope adds to the dramatic effect of these novels.

12. The "innocent eye" approach, used by Clemens in The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn and by Harper Lee in To Kill a Mockingbird, sharply reveals the hypocrisies of our society.

13. The life of the Southern Negro as seen in Black Like Me is not much different from what it was in the days of Richard Wright's childhood, as presented in Black Boy.

14. Atticus in To Kill a Mockingbird and Pieter in Too Late the Phalarope find themselves victims of

their respective societies.

15. The townspeople in To Kill a Mockingbird could be compared with their nineteenth century counterparts in The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.

16. Paton feels the seeds of South Africa's destruction are planted in the unrealistic attitude of the white Afrikaners.

17. The Negro is often critical of the apathy he finds in many of his fellow Negroes.

18. The continuous frustration of the Negro male by his society has driven him to act irrationally and impulsively at times.

19. The stifling of the social and economic maturity of the Negro male by the white society has resulted in the development of an almost matriarchal structure in many Negro families.

Presentation of the book report panels. Each group should have its secretary make an appointment with the teacher to discuss tentative plans for the presentation of the panel. These plans should be in written form. At this meeting, preferably a week before the planned presentation, the teacher may wish to make suggestions or give criticism. If guest speakers are to be invited, special arrangements are to be made, or audio-visual materials are to be used,

students must plan with the teacher a week in advance at least.

The purpose of the actual presentation is not so much to review the entire book as it is to interest the class in the book and/or to show how the theme of the book reflects modern problems in our society. The following plans are examples of panel presentations that might be used:

Group I--To Kill a Mockingbird. The panel could examine the problem of inequality, especially in regard to equal justice under the law. The following panels are suggested as models:

1. A short review of the book followed by a discussion of whether the Negroes receive equal treatment under the law in the United States today. Panel members should have used current newspapers and magazines for supplementary resources.
2. A short review of the book followed by an interview by the group of a local social worker or policeman concerning the criticisms of Negro leaders regarding the unfair treatment of Negroes by law enforcement officers.
3. A review of the book with students dramatizing such scenes as Atticus' appeal to the jury, Scout's dismissal of the "mob," the conversation between

Scout and Uncle Jack as he explains why Atticus is called a "nigger-lover."

4. A review of the book emphasizing the inability of the Maycomb adult world to recognize their part in the injustice of Tom's trial. Such scenes as the teacher's discussion of Hitler's injustice toward the Jews and the tea party held by Aunt Alexandra could be presented and analyzed in detail.

Group II--Black Boy. The panel could examine the inequality of opportunity which the Negro has faced. Panel presentations such as the following are suggested:

1. A review of the book emphasizing the closed doors that Richard Wright faced. Students could dramatize such scenes as the one that took place in the optical shop in Jackson in which Wright finds that he will not be allowed to learn a trade, the scene with the principal in which Wright learns how even the principal must cater to the white world, and the scene in the library in which Wright finds that he must check out books under false pretenses.
2. A short review of the story and a panel interview of a representative from the Youth Opportunity Center, discussing the problems of finding jobs for Negroes in the local community.

3. A short review of the story and a panel discussion on the current attempts to equalize opportunities with such programs as Head Start and the Job Core.

Group III--Raisin in the Sun. This panel may emphasize the problem of housing for the Negro. The following panels are suggested:

1. A short review of the play and a panel discussion concerning the problem of open housing. Current magazines, newspapers, and personal interviews may be used as resources.
2. A short review of the play followed by a panel interview of local real estate dealers concerning the problems of Negro housing.
3. A review of the play presenting scenes showing the "coming into manhood" of Walter, as he matures from the unrealistic son to head of the family as he tells representatives of the "community improvement" organization that despite the representatives' offer to "buy him out at a profit," Walter and his family will move into the white community.
4. A fifty-minute play reading of Raisin in the Sun emphasizing the importance to all of the family of the buying of the house.

Group IV--Too Late the Phalarope. This panel may stress the impossible nature of apartheid. The following panels are suggested:

1. A short review of the novel and a discussion of whether or not apartheid will ever work and whether or not "separate but equal" advocates in this country have a point.
2. A review of the novel illustrating the situation of the Negro in South Africa, with passages from the book.
3. A review of the novel illustrating the conflict of the traditional Afrikaner with the new generation with the dramatization of scenes showing conflict between Jakob Van Vlaanderen and his family.
4. A short review of the novel followed by a panel interview of an African student from a local college discussing the situation of the Negroes in South Africa. (A large map of Africa should be made available for reference.)

Group V--The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. This panel will reflect the historical attitude of the whites toward the Negro. The following panels are suggested:

1. A short review of the book, reading and discussing selections which indicate the attitude toward the place of the Negro in the Southern community.

2. A panel discussion illustrating with proof from The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn and other works read by panel members that Negro behavior is related to the expectation of that behavior on the part of the white population: A prime example would be Jim's "Uncle Tom" behavior in the chapters dealing with Tom's attempt to free him as opposed to his behavior in the chapters in which he and Huck travel down the river. Examples from Black Boy revealing Wright's justification for stealing and from To Kill a Mockingbird, illustrating Tom's logic for his attempt to escape could also be used.
3. A panel study of the character of Jim, revealing his dreams, fears, attitudes toward himself and his relationship with the white world.

After the presentation of each panel, the panel members may prepare and administer a short quiz to the class over the material which they have presented to the class. Each class member is expected to complete a short critique sheet for the individual panels.

The last meeting of the panels might be a discussion of the effectiveness of their own panels, based on the answers given to the quiz which they administered, the suggestions given in the critique sheet, and their own

personal observation. The secretary may prepare a group evaluation indicating the strengths and weaknesses of the presentation with suggestions for improvements.

Final discussion and evaluation. The unit is concluded with a general discussion of the communication process illustrated during the course of the unit. This discussion might include the various techniques the authors used to achieve their desired effect, such as the use of foreshadowing, flashbacks, points of view, choice of words, and selection of characters.

The teacher may also wish to read one or more of the most interesting individual themes, pointing out the effectiveness of the organization to good communication. The teacher may also want to read a paper which indicated the universality of the theme of the unit. For example, he might read a paper written on the topic, "Ignorance is the Twin of Bigotry," and allow the students to discover this truth from the discussion of their books.

The discussion should culminate with reference again to stereotypes. It would be hoped that the novels and discussions of the novels and the social problems represented in the novels should help the student to understand the Negro as an individual as well as a member of a group.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY

It was the purpose of this study to define and evaluate the book report panel as a method of helping to develop student communication skills: listening, reading, writing, and speaking; and of aiding the student to gain a better understanding of the ways in which human beings act, think, and feel.

The terms multilevel and grouping techniques were defined as follows: multilevel communication means that reading, writing, speaking, and listening are done on the levels of understanding, interpretation, and evaluation; while for purposes of this study grouping techniques are those procedures used to divide a given class or section into two or more groups on the bases of interest and ability, as well as teacher evaluation and standardized tests, for the purpose of adapting instruction.

Selected literature in the following areas was reviewed: (1) the use of literature as a means of teaching communication, (2) approaches to the teaching of literature, (3) the problem of selection of literature, (4) various devices used for student reporting of what is read, and (5) the use of group techniques in the study of literature.

The value of the book report panel was discussed and

illustrated as a means of enabling the student (1) to become aware of the need for communication and for developing skill in all aspects of it, (2) to become aware of the wide degree of variation in purpose possible in communication, (3) to recognize the specific values inherent in all facets of the communication complex, and (4) to recognize individual responsibility in the intra-group communication process.

The potential value of the book report panel as a means of helping the student develop listening, reading, and speaking skills was discussed and illustrated.

A specimen book report panel resource unit in the area of Recognition of Social Problems: the Racial Question was constructed and recommendations were made concerning its possible utilization. In connection with this unit a list of thirty volumes, whose subject content (the question of the relationship between races, religions, or ethnic groups), level of difficulty, literary value and availability lend themselves to use as subjects of high school book report panels, was compiled.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX

The following study guide is designed to aid the average or the below-average student to follow the action of the story:

I. Study Guide: To Kill a Mockingbird

Chapter I.

1. Give a brief family history of the Finches.
2. Describe the Radley situation.

Chapters II and III.

1. Describe Miss Caroline's "education" on Scout's first day of school. What does she learn about the Maycomb children?
2. What is Scout's attitude toward education? Why does she feel this way?

Chapters IV, V, VI, VII, and VIII.

1. What superstitions surround the Radley Place?
2. What does Miss Maudie mean when she uses the expression "three-fourths colored folks and one-fourth Stephanie Crawford"?
3. Give some evidence that someone in the Radley house is aware of the presence of Scout and Jem.

Chapter IX.

1. Why does Scout swear?
2. Why is Atticus defending Tom? Give two reasons.

Chapter X.

1. Why does Scout think of her father as old and feeble?
2. Why does Jem tell her not to brag to her friends about her father's shooting of the dog?

Chapter XI.

1. Explain Atticus' admiration of his critic, Mrs. Dubose.

Chapter XII.

1. Describe Calpurnia's relationship to the white and colored world.

Chapters XIII and XIV.

1. Discuss Aunt Alexandria's "standards of social behavior."

Chapter XV.

1. How does Scout break up the crowd at the jail?

Chapters XVI, XVII, XVIII, and XIX.

1. How does Atticus intend to win the case for Tom?
2. How does Gilmer attempt to discount Tom's testimony?

Chapter XX.

1. Why does Mr. Dolphus give the impression that he is a drunk?

Chapters XXI-XXXI.

1. How do the missionary tea in Chapter XXIII and the current events discussion on Hitler in

Chapter XXVI show the incongruity of adult values?

2. How does Bob Ewell attempt to seek revenge on the three who he feels are responsible for his "humiliation."
3. Explain the position of Heck Tate and Atticus in their argument over whether to accept the supposition that Ewell "fell on the knife."
4. What does Scout mean when she says in the last chapter, "You can't understand other people until you get into their skin for a minute."

The following questions are to be discussed by the group:

A. Explain the function of the following characters: (What do they represent and why does the author include them?).

a. Jean Louise Finch
b. Atticus Finch
c. Jeremy Finch
d. Charles Baker Harris
e. Dill
f. Arthur Radley
g. Aunt Alexandra
h. Calpurnia
i. Miss Maudie Alkinson
j. Francis
k. The Cunninghams
l. Bob Ewell
m. Mayelle Ewell
n. Mrs. Dubose
o. Miss Crawford
p. Judge Taylor
q. Tom Robinson
r. Mr. Dolphus Raymond
s. Uncle Jimmy

B. How have these characters changed in attitude during the course of the story?

C. Who is the central figure in the story? (Students may need to be given a review of "point of view" at this point.)

D. Identify each of the novel's various plots.

E. Show how the quotation, "It is a sin to kill a mockingbird. They harm no one and they create beautiful music," contributes to our understanding of the novel.

F. From the brief visit that Scout and Jem pay to the First Purchase Methodist Church, enumerate the many facts the reader learns about the Negro's lot in Maycomb, Alabama.